



TITLE:

Abstract of Vol.7, May.1990

AUTHOR(S):

---

CITATION:

Abstract of Vol.7, May.1990. 西洋古典論集 1990, 7: 133-141

ISSUE DATE:

1990-05-31

URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/68579>

RIGHT:

## SUMMARIES

### Original Elements in Homer's Version of the Polyphemus Story

Tetsuo Nakatsukasa

The Polyphemus story in the *Odyssey* is based on a popular folk-tale, wide-spread throughout the world. Since the time of Wilhelm Grimm, more and more versions of this folk-tale have been collected and various elements of the Homeric version have been analyzed by many scholars. Some parts of the Homeric version correspond with the folk-tales and illustrations in Greek art, while others differ. So, a comparative study of Homer's story with other versions will suggest what Homer borrowed and what he invented.

The Homeric version consists of three main episodes (the blinding of the ogre; the name-trick; and the escape of the hero), and omits apparently the motif of the magic ring. Each episode contains a variety of incidents, but here I shall consider only four of these. They are amusing in themselves and also illustrate Homer's art of story-telling. I have used O.Hackman's and J.G.Frazer's collections of folk-tales as the basis for my study.

1. The inebriation of Polyphemus. In some folk-tale versions, the giant gets drunk with his own wine. Polyphemus, however, drinks not wine but milk and is made drunk by the marvellous wine given to him by Odysseus. Perhaps Homer changed the drunken ogre into a milk-drinker and invented Odysseus' offering of wine to Polyphemus to introduce the gruesome present from Polyphemus and the name-trick of Odysseus.

2. The method of escape. The commonest method of escape in the folk-tales is for the heroes to cover themselves with an animal skin and to crawl out of the cave. Odysseus and his companions, however,

escaped--Odysseus clinging to the belly of one ram; his companions each tied to three rams. There has been much speculation about the reason why Homer did not follow the usual method. I think that Homer chose his version for the sake of variation and contrast, with the episode of the Sirenes in mind. When Odysseus sailed past the Sirenes' island, he alone was tied to the mast, in contrast to the escape from Polyphemus when only Odysseus was not tied to a ram. This use of variation and contrast is found in many other episodes.

3. The motif of the magic ring. Many folk-tale versions end with the episode of the talking ring or other magic objects. After the hero has escaped from the cave, he mocks the giant, who throws down a ring as a gift to the victor. The moment he puts it on his finger, it cries out, 'Here I am!', and guides the blinded giant to him. The hero escapes only by cutting off his finger. While A.B.Cook, D.L.Page and C.S.Brown have attempted to find the traces or transformations of this motif in the Odyssean story, A.Kurumisawa argues that the Homeric version cannot include the ring motif. Considering the difference between epic and folk-tale, I am inclined to agree with the former theory.

4. The origin of the name 'Utiis'. According to Hackman, the trick with the name 'Utiis' ('Nobody') does not belong to the Polyphemus story but is borrowed from another popular folk-tale, in which a human being outwits a fairy or a demon with the deceptive name, 'Myself'. The name 'Utiis' seldom occurs in genuine folk-tales. I am not convinced by the argument that 'Utiis' is not a false name but a nickname derived from Etruscan forms of Odysseus or the word 'us' (ear). It seems more likely that Homer borrowed the idea of the name-trick from some unrelated folk-tale and invented 'Utiis' for his story. He appreciated that the main point of the folk-tale was the giant's defeat by a little man and devised an appropriate name for the little hero. 'Utiis' means 'Nobody' or 'Worthless One', but the 'Worthless One' conquers the mighty giant, Polyphemus (Much Famed). If Homer invented Odysseus' offering of wine to Polyphemus, it is probable that he also invented the name 'Utiis'.

## Landschaften in der Odyssee

### —Sehen und Erzählen—

Teruo Ito

Die Landschaftsschilderungen treten in Odysseus' Berichten seiner Abenteuer auf. Denn das mit Augen Gesehene nimmt an der Wirklichkeit des Berichtenden teil. Man kann hier auf den inneren Zusammenhang der Landschaftsschilderungen mit der Form der Ich-Erzählung und deren Charakter als Erlebnisse eines Erzählenden hinweisen. Unsere Definition geht vom wahrnehmenden Subjekt aus und gründet auf der Voraussetzung, daß Landschaft nicht als selbstverständlich gegebene Umwelt naiv und unreflektiert erfahren, sondern bewußt zum Gegenstand des Erlebens gemacht wird. Erst derjenige, der in die freie Natur geht, erfährt Natur als Landschaft. Was wir Landschaft nennen, ist nicht etwas von der Natur Gesondertes, sondern innerhalb der Natur ein einzelnes, konkreter Erfahrenes.

Odysseus ist Heimkehrer. Die Liebe zu seinem Heimatland zieht sich als roter Faden durch die Odyssee. Die Natur wird von dem Heimkehrer immer aufgesucht und immer mit seinen Augen gesehen. Hier wird die Landschaft selbst zum Gegenstand der Schilderung. Durch Odysseus' Reflexion über die Natur gewinnen die Landschaften an Wirklichkeitsnähe. Bei Kalypso und den Phäaken fehlt nicht der Betrachter, er steht und staunt. Deshalb schildert Homer Landschaften. In Odysseus' Ich-Erzählung fällt das *`θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι'* fort, das geht restlos im Erlebnis des Erzählenden auf. So sieht Odysseus Landschaften. Diesen Landschaften verleiht erst das Erlebnis, erst das Ich, das sie wahrnimmt, den Glanz und den Sinn. Bei der epischen Erzählung zeigen uns die Variationen in der Landschaftsbeschreibung, in wie enger Relation die Landschaft zur epischen Handlung steht. So eng ist diese Beziehung zur jeweiligen Situation, daß sich das gleiche Landschaftsbild nach dem Willen des Dichters zu wandeln vermag. Nun können wir wiederholen: Odysseus sieht Landschaften,

während Homer diese erzählt.

## On the Catalogue of Heroines in the Odyssey

Yoshiko T. Nishimura

In the eleventh book of the Odyssey, the hero beholds famous women in legend materializing before him. They relate their lineage and their fate. The scene (11.225-327) traditionally called the Catalogue of Heroines is full of difficulties and controversies like the entire book.

Some critics have regarded the catalogue as a later addition to the story of Odysseus' visit to the Underworld. However, a remarkable structural symmetry dominates the hero's entire tale, down to the smallest detail. Whether this guarantees the authenticity of the catalogue or not, it deserves scrutiny. I have attempted to analyze the form of the Catalogue and then to consider its meaning.

First comes an analysis of the hero's tale, where he recounts his adventures on his way home from Troy. It begins with the ninth book and ends in the twelfth. One can detect a symmetrical structure in each book, except the eleventh. Each of the books, nine, ten, and twelve, contain three episodes. The first two episodes are short. The last one, which is the central theme of each book, is narrated at great length. Although the poet constructed the tale of Odysseus' experiences similarly, the eleventh book seems to deviate from the norm.

The construction seems to be quite different from that of the other three books, but that does not mean that it is badly organized. In fact, our analysis proves that the structure of the eleventh book reflects the same unusual characteristics as does the peculiar content of this book. It can be divided into five sections: (1) the conversation with Elpenor, Tiresias and Anticleia, (2) the

Catalogue of Heroines, (3) what is called the Intermezzo, which is put in the middle of the hero's tale of his wanderings, (4) the meeting with Agamemnon, Achilles and Ajax, (5) the description of the inner recesses of Hades, where six heroes of the past appear. The first section is similar to the fourth one, as both parts include a meeting and a conversation with three ghosts. The second and the fifth sections have a catalogue of famous men and women respectively. Thus these five sections can be grouped in three parts: a pair of conversations, two catalogues and a pivot. Two sections appear on each side of the Intermezzo, and in this arrangement, the eleventh book adopts a variation of the three-part structure used in the other books.

The fourteen women in the Catalogue of Heroines are also arranged with a geometric formality. They are divided into two parts. The first half consists of eight women. Two pairs of mothers each having two sons by Zeus or Poseidon are placed outside of another two paired groups of four women. The second half consists of two groups of three women. The organization is basically mechanical. Simple ordering like this must have been helpful to an oral poet.

Some scholars have rejected the Catalogue, on the grounds that it, and the women mentioned in it, have nothing to do with the rest of the eleventh book or the entire work. But in fact, the substance of the Catalogue, as well as its form, is admirably constructed. The poet selected the women in the Catalogue so that they had something to do with other parts of the work. The Catalogue has some relation to the preceding scenes of Tiresias and Anticleia. At the same time, it prepares for the following scenes of Agamemnon and the so-called Great Sinners. The detailed accounts of Tyro and Chloris, including a brief mention of Clymene and Eriphyle, serve as an underplot for the sudden appearance of Theoclymenus in the fifteenth book. Thus the Catalogue is not just a spectacular scene to entertain an audience, but is linked closely with the other scenes of the Odyssey.

## **The Appeal of Gaia and the Iliad**

**Yoshikazu Shiroe**

Gaia, over-populated with men, appealed to Zeus for help. He took pity on her and caused many people to die by means of two great wars. That was the plan of Zeus. This tradition, which is preserved in the Cypria, should be considered to be reflected in the appeal of Thetis and the plan of Zeus in Book I of the Iliad, even though the Cypria was composed later than the Iliad.

This proposition is supported by the fact that the poet designed to present the whole Trojan War in the Iliad. The duel between Menelaos and Paris and the breach of truce by Pandaros caused the battle to start and, therefore, have a similar function to the rape of Helen, which was the cause of the War. Thus, the appeal of Thetis to Zeus to destroy the Achaean soldiers has a similar function to the appeal of Gaia, which was the primary cause of the Trojan War.

## **Mythical Themes and Narrative Pattern in the Hymn to Hermes**

**Satoshi Iwaya**

In the Hymn to Hermes, Hermes steals Apollo's cattle after he invents the lyre. Sophocles, however, inverted the order in his satyric drama *Ichneutae*. Apollo, who appears in the prologue, complains of the loss of the cattle. He offers a reward to anyone who will help him. Hearing that, Silenus offers, with his Satyrs, to help in the search. When the Satyrs discover the tracks of the cattle, a strange sound comes from somewhere and startles them. At

this point the nymph, Cyllene, appears from the cave and explains to them that it is the sound of the lyre played by the infant god, Hermes. She also mentions the hides which Hermes used in making the lyre. The Satyrs identify the skins with those of the missing cattle.

Apollodorus (Bibl. 3.10.2) follows generally the narrative of the Hymn but like Sophocles he places the theft of the cattle before the invention of the lyre. Hermes strung the shell of a tortoise with strings made from the cows he had sacrificed. Apollodorus must have felt uneasy with the plot of the Hymn, and followed the version of the Ichneutae. Why did the poet of the Hymn adopt his narrative order?

Another odd plot sequence is found in the episode of the old man of Onchestus (87-93, 185-212). Hesiod's *Megalai Eoiai* tells another story of the theft of Apollo's cattle. While Apollo was living at the house of Admetus, Hermes stole the cattle of Apollo. An old man named Battus saw Hermes leading the cattle away. Battus asked for a reward to tell no one about the theft. Hermes promised to give it to him. Later, Hermes came back in disguise to test him. He offered him a robe as a bribe. Battus took it and told him about the cattle. Hermes was so angry, he turned him into a rock.

The old man of Onchestus is plainly this figure, for he witnessed the theft and was strictly forbidden by Hermes to talk about it. Hermes, however, doesn't come back to test him, and there is no scene of the petrification of the old man. It is Apollo who asks the old man whether he knows about the cattle. One cannot help feeling that the story is incomplete.

These two odd sequences are related to the narrative patterns of oral poetry. The structure of the plot in oral poetry is built around the mythical themes. The oral epic tradition contains several kinds of mythical themes, such as the Withdrawal of the Hero, the Search, and the Birth of the God. Each mythical theme has its own series of elements that follow each other in a fixed order. The oral poet can make use of those fixed narrative patterns for his



composition and performance. They were an aid to quick composition.

Concerning the odd sequences pointed out above, one finds two mythical themes in the Hymn to Hermes: 'the Birth of the God' and 'the Search'. The Birth of the God is composed of the following elements: 1. The birth of the young god under some persecution or unusual situation. 2. The god obtains some of his proper attributes. 3. The god performs a great exploit. 4. The confirmation of roles of the god. The Search is composed of the following elements: 1. The protagonist loses something. 2. He makes a long journey. 3. He gets help twice from two helpers (the second has something to do with the prophecy). 4. He finds the object of his search.

From these narrative patterns, it is clear that the invention of the lyre is the second element of the Birth of the God. The poet of the Hymn to Hermes depicts the lyre as a weapon of Hermes: 'The lyre sounded terribly (=smerdaleon) at the touch of his hand' (53-54). The word 'smerdaleon' is usually used in the battle scenes of epic poetry. For example, the shield of Achilles is said to be 'smerdaleon' (terrible to see) (Il.20.260), and Diomedes 'smerdaleon d' eboesen' (shouted with a terrible cry) (Il.8.92). Hermes obtains the lyre soon after his birth. He uses it afterwards in the 'battle' with Apollo. The narrative pattern of the Birth of the God requires the acquisition of attributes as a second element. The poet shows his faithfulness to the pattern here. He attaches greater importance to the proper narrative pattern than to the natural plot sequence.

It is the same with the 'Battus' element. The Search requires the appearance of a helper; on the other hand, the poet wanted to include the Battus episode in his narrative, since it underlines Hermes' cunning nature. So he gives the old man of Onchestus two functions, as a witness like Battus and as a helper in the Search. Consequently, the old man of Onchestus is forbidden by Hermes to talk about the theft, and is asked about it by Apollo.

Two odd sequences described above are not the result of a random mixture of mythical themes, but the result of the poet's fidelity to the narrative patterns of oral poetry.

## Virgil's Lamentation over Marcellus (Aen.6.860-886)

Takayuki Yamasawa

Why did Virgil add the lamentation over doomed Marcellus to his 'pageant of Roman heroes (Heldenschau)' in Aeneid Book 6? Whether it is really an inserted (or rewritten) passage or not, there is at least some clumsiness in the hasty transition from dark and sorrowful mood of the 'Marcellus episode' to somewhat brighter description of Anchises encouraging his son by revealing all about the future glories of Rome ('incenditque animam famae uenientis amore').

Marcellus, nephew of Augustus, was looked upon as the next ruler of Roman state by most people until his untimely death, and Virgil shared this expectation, too. Therefore he intended to depict the death of Marcellus as a great, irreparable loss to the Romans. This is why the poet included him in the catalogue of Roman rulers, i.e. 'Heldenschau'. In doing so, Virgil seems to have felt no need of reconciling his pitiful lamentation with the narrative flow of Aeneid Book 6.